Increase in Telephone Connections

*71. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there would be a 300 per cent increase over the existing 43 million telephone connections by the year 2006 to 1.28 billion telephones;

(b) whether 75 per cent of the connections would depend on the cables while the balance would be through wireless technology: and

(c) if so, Government's plans to cater to this phenomenal growth ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The average annual growth of telephones obtained during last three years is about 22%. The status of telephones by the end of 31-03-2006 will be 0.10424 billion (10.424 Crores). This will correspond to a teledensity of 9.53 per hundred. This includes wired as well as wireless technology. Out of 104.24 million telephones it is projected to have 77.83 million (74.66%) on fixed lines, which includes WLL, and 26.41 million cellular telephones. This phenomenal growth will be catered by various policy measures indicated in the New Telecom Policy, 1999 (NTP, 99), which includes suggestion for faster roll-out of network in the rural areas, promotion of private investment in the Telecom Sector, encouragement of indigenous manufacturing of telecom equipment, including strengthening of research & development in this regard as well as the steps to improve customer services. Planning Commission has constituted a Working Group for the formulation of Tenth Five Year Plan. This Working Group in its recommendations has strongly supported the above approach. The Report of the Wroking Group, would be taken into account by the Planning Commission while drafting the 10th Five Year Plan to achieve the above objectives.